

Remarks

The following is a response to the Office Action dated May 23, 2003.

Per the above amendment, the reference designation noted by the examiner to be in error has been corrected. Also, claims 2 and 5 have been canceled, claims 1, 10 and 11 amended, and claim 13 added.

Claims 1, 3, 5 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Brain U.S. Patent 5,305,743; claims 2, 10 and 11 rejected under 35 U.S.C 103(a) as being obvious under Brain and Shibata JP409216240A; claim 4 rejected as being obvious under Brain; and claim 7 rejected under the combination of Brain and Sullivan U.S. Patent 5,243,971.

To the extent that the rejection of claims 2 and 5 is now moot, the rejections of the other claims by the examiner are respectively traversed hereinbelow.

Brain '743 describes a laryngeal mask having a back plate formation molded integrally as one piece with its inflatable cuff by a molding technique involving inner and outer mold tools. Although this technique shows a variation in wall thickness between the cuff and the back plate, in practice it is difficult to mold components with large variations in wall thickness. The present invention realizes that a rotational molding technique is particularly suited to forming an inflatable cuff for a mask and that it can also be used where the cuff is to be formed integrally with the more rigid, thicker mount since variations in wall thickness are readily achievable. Brain does not in any way suggest that rotational molding would be suitable for forming the cuff of masks.

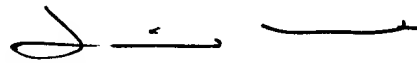
The cited Japanese document JP409216240 Shibata describes a face mask having an integral thick wall and thin wall cushion section formed by rotary molding. The disclosure does not anywhere suggest that the cushion could be inflatable in the manner required for laryngeal masks and as specified in Claims 1 to 11. Further, the Japanese document does

nothing to suggest that a mount be preformed and a cuff be subsequently molded onto it in the manner set out in the amended Claim 13.

Sullivan US5243971 describes a nasal mask having a distensible membrane attached at its edge to a rigid shell. Column 5, line 3 makes it clear that the membrane is adhered to the more rigid molding. There is nothing in this document to suggest that the membrane should be made by rotational molding, or that the membrane could be molded integrally with a more rigid component, or that it could be molded onto pre-formed component, in the manner required by the amended claims of the present application.

In view of the foregoing, the examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the application and pass the pending claims to issue.

Respectfully submitted,



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